



Gorillas with the Rushegura group in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in Uganda. This group was one of the first in the area habituated for gorilla tracking tourism. Photo: Jason Houston/USAID

## EAST AFRICA

### ECONOMICS OF NATURAL CAPITAL IN EAST AFRICA

East Africa contains some of the African continent's most vast and iconic landscapes. These biodiversity-rich areas are critical to the region's nature-based tourism industry, which contributes significantly to East Africa's gross domestic product. Many East Africa's wildlife habitats exist across national boundaries and hence require collaboration to address the challenges of the conservation of wildlife and the habitats they depend on. Wildlife habitats have become fragmented by rapid urban, rural, and industrial development, which, in turn has created new avenues for illegal wildlife trafficking. Additionally, corruption and the lack of political will has enabled natural resources to be harvested at unsustainable rates. Climate change is projected to further aggravate the existing drivers of natural resource conservation threats through increasingly erratic weather patterns. The Economics of Natural Capital in East Africa project supports USAID and the East African Community's (EAC) strategic priorities for harmonizing policy and legal frameworks, sustainable management of key transboundary ecosystems, anti-poaching, and combating wildlife trafficking, as well as learning and leadership for biodiversity conservation.

#### OUR WORK

Wildlife contributes both economically and intrinsically to the East Africa region's natural capital and is a critical asset for East Africa's future growth and development. Many priority landscapes and wildlife habitats in East Africa are crossed by political boundaries, making it critical for the nations to work

together on the survival of wildlife and the habitats they depend on. Weak regulatory frameworks, lack of political will, and inadequate stakeholder capacities have enabled increased illegal and legal harvesting of natural capital at unsustainable rates. Climate change is also projected to worsen land use changes and increase population pressures on a shrinking natural capital base. Awareness about the economic and intrinsic value of wildlife remains low. Therefore, to prioritize sustainable conservation and management, the real and perceived value of East Africa's natural capital must be increased.

## APPROACH

At the core of the project is the understanding that a regional effort is needed to address national-level problems that are exacerbating the decline in wildlife populations and habitat loss. The project focuses on strengthening the EAC regional policy dialogue and the evidence base on transboundary natural resource management and biodiversity conservation. It also provides research, data, and economic analysis on the current and potential value of natural capital in East Africa to the EAC, partner states, regional governments and institutions, civil society organizations, and end users. The project uses a rigorous assessment on the value of natural capital in East Africa to create evidence-based outreach materials for targeted audiences and conduct extensive stakeholder engagement. As a result, the project enables institutions, organizations, and communities to better engage in evidence-based policy analysis and advocacy functions on conservation and management of natural capital.

Environmental Incentives and Anchor Environmental Consultants, will closely collaborate with experts from the EAC Secretariat, EAC Member States, conservation organizations and private sector actors to:

- (i) create new knowledge by co-developing natural capital assessments,
- (ii) generate evidence-based material from the assessments,
- (iii) support stakeholder learning and advocacy,
- (iv) facilitate results-based dialogue grounded in best practices for the conservation sector, and
- (v) support decision-making processes by building regional and local capacity to produce and interpret natural capital information, to better manage and demonstrate economic value of wildlife.

By increasing the perceived value of living wildlife, the project will help foster the collaborative management and conservation of transboundary natural resources and contribute towards the reduction of wildlife poaching and trafficking. A greater understanding of East Africa's environmental resources will support the collective goals of USAID and the EAC to enable a policy environment for improved conservation and management of natural capital in East Africa.

**BUDGET:** \$2.94 million

**DURATION:** 2019-2022

### ACTIVITY LOCATIONS

Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda

### IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

Environmental Incentives, LLC  
Anchor Environmental Consultants

### KEY PARTNERS

East Africa Community

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